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A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

THE DESIGN, ORIGIN, AND PROGRESS

OF THE

TRAINING

INSTITUTION FOR NURSES

FOR

Hospitals, Families, and the Poor.

PRESIDENT.

THE RIGHT HON. AND RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

LONDON :

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The Council of this Institution now consists of the following

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THE REV. PELHAM MAITLAND.

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Physicians { DR. TODD.
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A BRIEF ACCOUNT,

ETC.

ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, FITZROY SQUARE,
November, 1850.

THIS Institution is designed to improve the qualification and character of Nurses for attendance on the sick, by providing for them good opportunities of professional training, combined with the best moral and religious principles and habits.

The design was first suggested by a very general experience of the serious disadvantage to medical practitioners and their patients, arising from the difficulty of procuring well-qualified and trusty Nurses, which seemed capable of remedy by providing for them a more regular professional training, and by leading them to regard their calling more systematically as a religious one, to be engaged in upon higher motives, and to be discharged in a more trustworthy spirit than heretofore; and securing to them, at the same time, a better social position than they could otherwise have attained.

It was hoped that the means which have been found successful in forming the high character of the Clergy and Physicians of England, might be made instrumental, in their proper order and degree, for the improvement of persons who take the more humble parts in the same holy office of attendance on the sick and dying, and might thus be made further conducive to the welfare of society and the Divine glory, by the more habitual application of a Christian spirit to the relief of bodily suffering.

With a view to the better securing of these results, it was thought advisable to offer in this Institution a legitimate field of labour for ladies who, being sufficiently disengaged from more urgent claims of natural and social duty, and desirous of finding the most satisfactory employment for the time and talents which God has given them, might, without regard to worldly motives, be inclined to devote themselves to a work of Christian love, such as this is, and capable, as it is, of being combined with other suitable and congenial exercises of piety and charity.

It was believed that there would not be found wanting in our Church devout women, ready to embrace and hold fast an opportunity like this, of imitating the example of their Divine Lord and Master, by endeavouring to do the work of Him who first loved us, and from whom, and through whom, and by whom are all things; and that their influence and example would be highly advantageous to the best interests of the Charity.

With these views a PUBLIC MEETING was held in London, on the 18th July, 1848, which was honoured by the Presidency of his late Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, and by the assistance of the Lord Bishop of London, the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, the Lord Bishop of Norwich, the Lord Bishop of Lichfield, the Lord Bishop of Manchester, the Earl of Harrowby, Earl Nelson, the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, and Dr. Todd; at which meeting Resolutions were passed, to the effect that the objects of the Institution were deemed to be of great public interest and importance; and that an Establishment should be then formed for promoting the

same, upon the principles of the Church of England, under the Presidency of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese ; and to be governed by a Council of twenty-four members, of whom fifteen were then named, with power to add to their numbers.

The PLAN OF THE INSTITUTION is as follows :—

The members of the COUNCIL must be donors of thirty guineas, or annual subscribers of three guineas, appointed by a General Meeting.

The immediate direction and personal superintendence of the establishment are committed to THE MASTER, (who must be a Clergyman of the Church of England, and a married man or a widower, and residing in or near to the Institution), and to a LADY SUPERINTENDENT, assisted by other ladies, her associates or SISTERS, and to two PHYSICIANS, all of whom must be approved by the President.

THE MASTER performs the duty of Chaplain to the Institution, and conducts or directs the religious instruction of the inmates, not being at liberty to undertake any other duties.

THE LADY SUPERINTENDENT, with the sanction and support of the Master, regulates all the domestic arrangements and other details of the Establishment, including the control of the inmates, and their appointment to their respective duties.

The other Members of the Institution consist of three classes, viz. :—

I. THE SISTERS are either resident in the establishment, contributing a moderate sum, sufficient to cover their share of the current expenses ; or they live with

their friends, or in some private family approved by the Master. In either case their office is to assist the Master and Lady Superintendent in creating and maintaining a deep though unostentatious spirit of religious responsibility throughout the common family of the establishment, as the groundwork of all their proceedings.

These Ladies are designed to be examples to the two inferior classes, and, under the direction of the Master and the Parochial Ministers, to visit the sick in their homes, or at the hospitals, as may be arranged with the Lady Superintendent, and to take part in the instruction and training of the probationers.

No Lady, not being a widow, can be received as a Sister under the age of thirty years, unless with consent of her parents.

The Ladies are under no engagement of any kind, beyond that of a declared approval of the printed Rules, with an expression of their desire to join the establishment, and to remain in it for a period not less than two years, but with liberty to leave it at any time on six months' notice.

The Ladies already admitted have entered the establishment without seeking to derive any benefit from it beyond the opportunity which it has afforded of satisfying their desire to make themselves useful upon the principles of Christian charity. It is not, however, intended that the absence of independent pecuniary means should be a bar to the admission of Ladies qualified by education and habits to adorn and influence such a Society, and to advance the interests of the Institution, although not blessed with worldly wealth; and if any such should be desirous of admission, it is proposed that

they should be received when the funds of the Institution enable the Council so to extend it.

II. THE PROBATIONERS are of two classes: the first class being young women, twenty-five years of age or upwards, likely to become qualified as Nurses by some few months' probation. The second class are young women of the age of eighteen or upwards, to be trained in the Institution and in the public hospitals, as opportunity may be afforded, under the direction of the Lady Superintendent, for a longer period; at the close of which, if approved, they may become Nurses. They are all to assist in the work of the house, and are to receive board, lodging, and washing, without charge. Those of the second class are to contribute a very moderate sum towards the current expenses; but if the funds of the Institution prove sufficient, it is intended that, in special cases, they may be admitted without being required to make any payment.

III. THE NURSES are admitted after having been Probationers, or otherwise, if duly qualified; their duty being to nurse the sick in hospitals and private houses, and when at home to assist in instructing the Probationers, as may be required by the Lady Superintendent. They have their home in the establishment, including board, lodging, and washing, and some clothing, and also a proper allowance of money, which is increased when they are sent from home on duty. Their engagement is determinable at a month's notice on either side; and if they continue members of the Institution for five years, they receive from the Council a certificate of competency and respectability, if found to deserve it.

OPENING OF THE INSTITUTION,

15th June, 1849.

A SITE for the Institution having been found in a commodious house near the Regent's Park, (No. 36, Fitzroy Square, in the district of St. John the Evangelist, Pancras,) the Council, by their Report to the First General Meeting, on the 15th of June, 1849, stated that the Establishment was then opened, and that the following members had been admitted; viz.—One Lady Superintendent, three Sisters, two Probationers, and seven Nurses; leaving room for the admission of another Sister, four more Probationers, and thirteen more Nurses. Four of the seven Nurses were at that time out on duty; and others were to be admitted until the full number of twenty should be completed.

At that date, the Donations received amounted to 1,188*l.* and the Annual Subscriptions to 222*l.*; and the Balance in hand, after paying for the fittings and furnishing of the house, and other preliminary expenses, was 621*l.*

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING,

Held 25th June, 1850.

At this Meeting the Council reported that the Rev. J. W. Twist having resigned the office of Master, the Rev. P. Maitland had been elected in his stead, and approved by the President. And further, to the following effect: viz.—There were then only one resident Sister, and four non-resident, who had all given valuable assistance as well in the business of the house as in the incidental duty of visiting the poor in the neighbourhood; and had contributed from their own resources, aided by the Poor-box, sufficient to supply medicines and other necessities and comforts for many sick families which they had visited, under the direction of the clergy of the district; lending books to read, and offering advice and consolation as cases requiring it had occurred; besides which, on every Sunday, assistance was given from the Institution in teaching at the Schools.

The benefits derived to the neighbouring poor by these kind offices were stated to have been very generally felt and acknowledged, and to be evidenced by the fact, that the sums contributed during the Winter to the Poor-box, for distribution by the Sisters, amounted to from 2*l.* to 3*l.* every month. These ladies, therefore, together with the Nurses and Probationers, had formed a truly

Christian community, working together for the advancement of the main object of the Institution, and employing their spare time in other works of charity within their reach.

The Council reported that, since the 15th of June, 1849, fourteen young women had entered as Probationers, of whom seven had been admitted as Nurses, and six were still in training; and that between that time and March 31st, 1850, seventeen Nurses had been employed; and that at the last mentioned date there were ten Nurses on the Establishment, and ten vacancies.

The total number of sick persons to whom Nurses had been sent during the above-named period was seventy-three; and in most of these cases great satisfaction had been expressed with their conduct, as well as much gratitude for the comfort and relief afforded.

The Balance in favour of the Institution was stated to have been, on the 31st of March last, 704*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.*, including 500*l.* invested in Exchequer Bills, and the Special Fund, after mentioned.

In the management of the House a strict economy had been observed, the weekly expenses not having amounted to so much as 9*s.* a-head, including fire and candles.

The Yearly Subscriptions had increased during the year from 220*l.* to 330*l.*, but was still not enough for maintaining the Institution in full efficiency; and therefore, for the present, a part of the Donations would have to be employed as Revenue.

The Council had opened a special Fund for Pensions and Rewards to superannuated and deserving Nurses; originating in gratuities offered to Nurses, and which

had been brought by them, according to the Rules, into the common stock. At present this Fund amounted only to 11*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*, but a hope was expressed of its being materially increased, and becoming, ultimately, a valuable bond of union and pledge for good conduct on the part of the Nurses; for which purpose the Council invited special contributions in aid of it.

The Council concluded by observing that there were many circumstances of encouragement for them to proceed; for that the Institution had, in the first year of its actual working, manifested a decided character of inherent vigour and self-dependence, by creating for itself *seven-tenths* of its efficient Nurses; that is to say, that of the ten then on the books, seven had been trained and formed in the Institution itself; and that during the first period of twenty-three weeks which followed the General Meeting of 1849, the proportion which the number of Nurses engaged on duty bore to those remaining at home, was as one and a half to one; but, in the second period of twenty-two weeks, there was a very material improvement in this respect, and the proportion was, two engaged on duty for one at home; and that the growing favour and confidence which were to be perceived, as well amongst those members of the Medical Profession, as amongst the private families, to whom the Institution had become known, formed a ground for gratitude in respect of the past, as well as of hope for the future.

There can be no impropriety in calling attention here to the favourable notice taken of this Institution by our Right Rev. President in the Charge given by his Lordship, on the 2d Nov. 1850, to the Clergy assembled

in St. Paul's Cathedral, at his late Diocesan Visitation. To find that the conduct of this Institution has merited his Lordship's publicly marked approval, must give heartfelt satisfaction to all who have taken an interest in its success, and must greatly augment the confidence of those who have joined, or may be disposed either to join us or to found similar institutions in other suitable places.

His Lordship observed that Sisterhoods of Mercy had been established in the Reformed Church long before they were known in the Roman Church, and that the possibility of conducting them in accordance with Protestant principles is proved by the great success and wide extension of the Society of Deaconesses, instituted in Paris in 1841, and always carefully guarded from the errors and abuses of the Church of Rome. FROM WHICH OBJECTIONS HIS LORDSHIP DECLARED THIS INSTITUTION TO BE ALSO FREE; suggesting at the same time that more extensive establishments of the like nature might be formed in strict accordance with the principles of our Reformed Church.